

## ASSESSING RISK TO CHILDREN FROM CONTACT WITH BATTERERS

---

### Level of physical danger to the victim

- ☐ Has the batterer ever choked the victim?
- ☐ Is the violence escalating?
- ☐ Is the violence becoming more severe?
- ☐ Does the batterer have access to weapons?
- ☐ Is the batterer extremely jealous or possessive?
- ☐ Is the batterer controlling?
- ☐ Has the victim been beaten by the batterer while pregnant?
- ☐ Has the batterer ever raped the victim?
- ☐ Has the batterer ever violated a restraining order?
- ☐ Has the batterer made lethal threats against the victim or the children? If so, how specific were the threats?
- ☐ Has the batterer killed or attacked pets?
- ☐ What types of injuries has the batterer caused?
- ☐ What is the batterer's criminal record?
- ☐ Does the batterer chronically abuse substances?
- ☐ Has the batterer been violent towards the children, or towards others?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### History of physical abuse towards the children

- ☐ Does the batterer spank the children?
- ☐ Has it ever left marks?
- ☐ Does the batterer ever grab the children roughly?
- ☐ Has the batterer been involved in fights (including any that appeared mutual) with the older children?
- ☐ Does the batterer minimize or justify physically abusive behaviors used in the past?

---

---

---

---

### **History of sexual abuse or boundary violations towards the children**

- ☐ Does the batterer respect the children's right to privacy, and maintain proper privacy to him/herself?
- ☐ Does the batterer expose the children to pornography?
- ☐ Does the batterer pressure the children for unwanted physical affection or engage them in inappropriate sexual conversation?
- ☐ Does the batterer make inappropriate comments about the children's bodies or physical development?
- ☐ Are there indications of secret-keeping?

---

---

---

---

---

---

### **Level of psychological cruelty to the victim or the children**

- ☐ Has the batterer interfered with the victim's social or professional contacts?
- ☐ Is the batterer economically coercive?
- ☐ Does the batterer dictate major decisions, showing contempt or disregard for the victim's opinions?
- ☐ Does the batterer monitor the victim's movements?
- ☐ Is the batterer dictatorial or minutely controlling towards the children?
- ☐ Does the batterer play the role of victim in the relationship?
- ☐ Does the batterer abruptly switch to kind and loving behavior when he/she wishes to achieve certain goals?
- ☐ Has the batterer sown divisions within the family?
- ☐ Is there evidence that the batterer is frequently dishonest?
- ☐ Is the batterer described by the victim, children, or other witnesses as "crazy-making"?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### **Level of entitlement and self-centeredness**

- ☐ Is the batterer frequently and unreasonably demanding, becoming enraged or retaliatory when not catered to?
- ☐ Does the batterer define the victim's attempts to defend her/himself as abuse of the batterer?
- ☐ Does the batterer have double standards regarding his/her conduct and that of other family members?
- ☐ Does the batterer appear to view the children as owned objects?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### **History of using the children as weapons, and of undermining the victim's parenting.**

- ☐ Has the batterer mistreated the children out of anger at the victim?
- ☐ Has the batterer taught them negative beliefs about the victim?
- ☐ Has the batterer ever prevented the victim from caring for a child?
- ☐ Has the batterer ever threatened to harm, kidnap, or take custody of the children?
- ☐ Has the batterer used the children to frighten the victim, such as by driving recklessly with them in the car?
- ☐ Has the batterer threatened to quit his/her job in order to avoid paying child support?
- ☐ Does the batterer knowingly involve the children in activities that the victim does not permit, or undermine the victim's authority in other ways?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### **History of placing children at physical or emotional risk while abusing the victim**

- ☐ Has the batterer been violent or mentally cruel during any of the mother's pregnancies?
- ☐ Has the batterer been violent in the presence of the children, assaulted the victim while a child was in her/his arms, or pushed a child out of the way to get at the victim?
- ☐ Has the batterer ever thrown objects in a way that has risked hitting the children?
- ☐ Has the batterer verbally abused or humiliated the victim in the children's presence?
- ☐ Has the batterer neglected the children when angry at the victim?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### **History of neglectful or severely underinvolved parenting**

- ☐ Does the batterer have a history of disappearing for hours, days or weeks at a time? Has the batterer ever refused to attend to children's medical needs?
- ☐ Has the batterer's lack of attentiveness ever put the children in danger?
- ☐ Has the batterer shown an abrupt interest in the children, perhaps including seeking custody, in response to the dissolution of the parental relationship?

The batterer's own knowledge and compassion regarding the children can be evaluated with such questions as:

- Can you tell me the names of your children's current and past teachers?
- Could you describe each child's infancy?
- What are each child's particular interests, likes, and dislikes?
- What type of struggles is each child currently encountering?
- What kind of involvement do you maintain with any children you have from past relationships?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Refusal to accept the end of the relationship, or to accept the victim's decision to begin a new relationship**

- ☐ Is the batterer depressed or panicked about the break-up, or insisting that the relationship is not over?
- ☐ Is the batterer stalking the victim?
- ☐ Did the batterer abruptly demand custody or expanded visitation upon learning that the victim had decided definitively not to go back to the relationship, or when the victim began a new romantic involvement?
- ☐ Has the batterer ever threatened or assaulted a new partner of the victim's, or warned the victim not to let anyone other than the batterer be around the children?
- ☐ Has the batterer attempted to frighten the children about the victim's new partner, or to induce guilt in them for developing an attachment to the new partner?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Level of risk to abduct the children**

- ☐ Have there been abrupt passport renewals or efforts to get the children's passports away from the victim?
- ☐ Have there been surprise appearances at the children's schools or daycares?
- ☐ Has the batterer been job-seeking in other states or countries?
- ☐ Has the batterer made unexplained travel plans?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### **Substance abuse history**

- ☐ What is the length and depth of the batterer's recovery?
- ☐ What is the batterer's level of insight regarding his/her recovery?
- ☐ Are proper treatment and self-help in place?
- ☐ Is there any tendency on the batterer's part to blame his/her violence on the addiction?

---

---

---

---

---

---

### **Mental health history**

- ☐ Has the batterer been diagnosed with such mental health illnesses as anti-social personality disorder, obsessive/compulsive disorder, major depression, or borderline personality disorder?

---

---

---

---

---

---

### **Other Notes:**

Adapted from:  
"Assessing Risk to Children from Batterers", Lundy Bancroft and Jay G. Silverman  
Lucy Carter, Lois Weithorn, and Richard Behrman, Domestic Violence and Children: Analysis and  
Recommendations, Domestic Violence and Children, Vol. 9, No. 3 (Winter 1999).